

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAN JO 02882 221730Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IGA-02 EB-07 AID-05 (ISO) W
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R 221515Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7863
INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 2882

GUATEMALA ALSO FOR ROCAP

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASIG, CS, ES, GT, HO, NU
SUBJECT: IGA REPORT ON ROCAP

REFS: (A) STATE 116635; (B) GUATEMALA 3167

1. SUMMARY. EMBASSY REGRETS DELAY IN REPLYING TO REFTEL A. HOWEVER, EVEN IF WE ARE TOO LATE TO CONTRIBUTE TO CEN RESPONSE TO IGA REPORT ON ROCAP, WE WISH TO HAVE OUR REACTION AND COMMENTS ON RECORD. IN SUM EMBASSY REACTION IS THAT REPORT CONTRIBUTES NOTHING TO ONGOING DIALOGUE OVER FUTURE OF CENTRAL AMERICAN INTEGRATION OR ROCAP MISSION; RECOMMENDATIONS ON TIMING OF ROCAP PHASE-DOWN OR PHASE-OUT, IF ACCEPTED, WOULD IMPACT ADVERSELY ON COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AMERICA AND ON U.S. PRESENCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND WOULD FLASH UNINTENDED SIGNALS RE GENERAL U.S. POSITION CONCERNING ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND COMMON MARKETS. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY WISHES TO ASSOCIATE ITSELF WITH THRUST OF COMMENTS OFFERED BY ROCAP DIRECTOR HARRISON IN
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REFTEL B. EXCEPT FOR ITS RECOMMENDATIONS ON TIMING OF ROCAP PHASE-OUT, IGA REPORT IS ESSENTIALLY A RESTATEMENT OF A BROAD CONSENSUS WHICH HAS EMERGED FROM CONTINUOUS FIELD-WASHINGTON AND STATE-AID DIALOGUE OVER SEVERAL YEARS. IT BEARS MENTION THAT THIS DIALOGUE WAS INITIATED BY ROCAP ITSELF IN PREPARATION OF REVISED DAP IN 1975, THAT ROCAP HAS TAKEN THE LEADERSHIP IN DEVEL-

OPING AND ARTICULATING THE CONSENSUS, AND IN WORKING OUT THE APPROACH AND THE TIMETABLE FOR PHASE-OUT SHOULD CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANT A PHASE-OUT DECISION. IN EMBASSY VIEW, IGA REPORT SHOULD HAVE RECORDED HIGH PRAISE FOR ROCAP'S DYNAMIC, IMAGINATIVE, AND CONSCIENTIOUS LEADERSHIP IN THIS EFFORT RATHER THAN TO HAVE IMPLIED THAT ROCAP WAS ENGAGED IN FOOT DRAGGING (OR WORSE) EXERCISE DESIGNED TO GUARANTEE ITS OWN SELF-PERPETUATION.

3. EMBASSY TAKES STRONG EXCEPTION TO IGA RECOMMENDATIONS ON TIMING OF ROCAP PHASE-OUT. SHOULD EVENTS OVER NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS LEAD TO DECISION THAT ROCAP SHOULD BE DISSOLVED, THE MANNER AND TIMING OF OUR IMPLEMENTATION OF THAT DECISION WILL BE CRITICAL. HANDLED POORLY AND ABRUPTLY, AS RECOMMENDED BY IGA, THE CLOSE-OUT WOULD BE PLAYED HERE AND IN U.S. AS DECLARATION OF SUDDEN LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA. THIS WOULD NOT ONLY AFFECT FLOW OF PRIVATE INVESTMENT AND LINES OF CREDIT TO COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AMERICA BUT WOULD PARALYZE AND DESTROY SUCH INSTITUTIONS OF INTEGRATION AS MIGHT HAVE A REASONABLE CHANCE OF SURVIVING OUR WITHDRAWAL AND CONTINUING TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUB-REGION. BILATERAL POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS WOULD BE STRONG AND NEGATIVE, FOR AN ABRUPT CLOSEDOWN WOULD BE TAKEN AS IMPLICIT CRITICISM OF EACH OF THE C.A. GOVERNMENTS. FINALLY, THE U.S. WOULD

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ENTER CENTRAL AMERICAN HISTORY BOOKS AS A VILLAIN ONCE

AGAIN, THIS TIME FOR BLATANTLY TURNING OUR BACK ON THE INTEGRATION MOVEMENT AT WHAT MAY BE A CRITICAL POINT IN ITS EVOLUTION. TO AVOID ALL OF THIS, AND STILL TO CLOSE OUT ROCAP, REQUIRES THAT WE MOVE VERY CAREFULLY AND IN A MANNER CALCULATED NOT TO REFLECT DISAPPROVAL OF OR LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA, THE EXISTING AND FUNCTIONING INSTITUTIONS OF INTEGRATION, OR THE INDIVIDUAL GOVERNMENTS.

4. FINALLY, AN ABRUPT CLOSE-OUT OF ROCAP, IN EMBASSY'S VIEW, COULD BE READ NOT ONLY AS WITHDRAWAL OF SUPPORT FOR CENTRAL AMERICAN INTEGRATION AND THE CACM, BUT AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE GENERAL U.S. POSITION TOWARD COMMON MARKETS AND OTHER FORMS OF INTEGRATION. SUCH AN INTERPRETATION WOULD, OF COURSE, WEAKEN THE IMPACT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT THAT THE U.S. FAVORS REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL INTEGRATION EFFORTS.

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